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ABSTRACT

The total development of the child can be enhanced and enriched through various activities in physical education, youth sport, and leisure pursuits. Children between the ages of 5 and 12 are eager, enthusiastic, highly motivated, and interested in physical activity, and they comprise the population served by the school physical education program and the youth sport program outside the school. A cooperative relationship between physical education and youth sport programs could result in a mutually beneficial relationship and could help in trying to meet the developing child's needs. Although more children are involved in youth sport programs than ever before, physical education programs are feeling the effects of dramatic budget cuts. Considering the time spent, the extensive process of skill development, and the social and emotional aspects involved, it is essential to establish a cooperative relationship for the benefit of the child. Both physical education and youth sport programs provide situations where attitudes toward and appreciation of competition can be learned. The cooperation of physical educators, parents, and youth sport leaders can do a great deal for the education of youth and for the promotion of both programs. (JMK)

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and
Agency Sponsored Sport:
What Relationship?

(Elementary Physical Education Perspective)

Cooperation not Competition

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By Mary E. Blann

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Physical Education Programs and Agency
Sponsored Sport: What Relationship?
(Elementary Physical Education Perspective)

It would appear to some that the best answer to the question posed by the title of this session, "Physical Education and Agency Sponsored Sport: What Relationship?", would be that they are the same except that one program goes on during school and the other after school. Others would say they were the same for the reason that they see youngsters playing games and that's what is done in "gym" and in youth sports, "Rec". Further, some people would say the two programs are very different: one being a "free-play" recess during school and the other being a Little League program of sports for future "Jocks". Clearly, there is more than meets the eye when considering a relationship between physical education and youth sport.

For our purpose here today I would like to present some thoughts and ideas on how elementary school physical education programs and youth sport programs share common purposes and objectives and although these programs have different areas of emphasis, the relationship can and should be one of cooperation.

Population:

Children between the ages of 5 and 12 are eager and enthusiastic, highly motivated and interested in physical activity. This is the population served by the physical education program in the school and the youth sport program outside the school.

The physical education program is generally considered an integral part of the total school curriculum and all the children in the school participate in the program of activities. The program provides a broad base of movement experiences from which future directions can be established. The program provides a background of a wide variety of skills in which the students participate for the development of body control and motor skills for effective and efficient participation. An

Basic locomotor, manipulative and stability skills are taught in the primary grades. Running, jumping, throwing, catching, kicking, striking, etc. are taught through a variety of movement experiences. These skills serve as the foundation for the later development of transitional skills and future sport-related skills. The activities planned provide a wide variety of movement experiences. A simple analogy might be a child going to an ice cream store that has 31 flavors and sampling a wide variety in order to find the ones he/she likes best. With practice and maturity the child progresses to more complex tasks requiring more refined skills. Instruction in the use of transitional skills for games, lead-up activities and creative game activities enables the youngster to reinforce skills and to select skill combinations to meet the requirements of particular game situations. Emphasis is on the child's participation for fun and enhancement of his/her self-esteem as well as for skill development.

As the child progresses up through fourth, fifth and sixth grades, many more specific sport-related skills are introduced. Rules and strategies take on greater significance and team cooperation and competition become more important.

Youth sports programs emphasize the development and refinement of specific sport-related skills necessary for participation in a competitive game situation. Considerable time is given to drills and practice of the sport skills for the purpose of improving performance. Official rules and complex game strategies are emphasized in the context of the game situation. Specialization is encouraged.

Based upon our knowledge of motor skill development, the concept of simple to complex sequence of development for skill acquisition, levels of ability, rates of learning, etc. the cooperative relationship between physical education and youth sport is a natural one.

As we know, giving a good foundation of basic skills in a variety of movement experiences provides the child with the tools for making choices when they are

Important goal of the program is that each child develops confidence and sufficient success to assure enjoyment and a positive attitude toward physical activity. In excess of 20 million youngsters and over a million adults are involved in programs of youth sport. Youth sport programs are competitive sports sponsored by local recreation and community organizations. They are open to all those youngsters who have an interest in participating. The program provides competitive game play in team sports such as football, soccer, basketball, baseball, and softball. In addition there may be swimming, track and field, and hockey programs included.

Considering this population's needs and interests a cooperative relationship seems apparent and necessary for a number of reasons:

First, more children are involved in youth sports than ever before. At the same time, programs of physical education are feeling the effects of dramatic budget cuts and general support for physical education programs in the school. This suggests that the physical education the children are getting they are getting primarily from a non-school setting and in many instances, without the benefit of the instruction and supervision of a professional physical educator.

Skills

Secondly, skill acquisition is a key ingredient in the planning and implementation of the program of activity for both physical education and youth sports.

As an essential part of the physical education curriculum in the elementary school, careful consideration is given to the developmental needs of children in the acquisition of skills. Recognition is given to the developmental stages that occur in skill development and the relationship of fundamental skills to sport-related skill development. Skill instruction in the physical education program is presented in a developmental sequence of learning experiences that enable the child to progress from simple to complex skills in a supportive, positive environment.

ready, willing and able in their future sport-related activities. Additionally, a sequential program of appropriate activities fosters a positive attitude toward participation as well as enhancing self concept. These attributes will serve the youth sport participant in good stead, as it will all youngsters involved in physical activity.

Time:

A youngster spends approximately 30-150 minutes per week in a physical education program. Compare this to a youth sport participant who may be spending up to 11 hr./per week in practice and competition.

Considering the time spent and the extensive process of skill development and the social and emotional aspects involved, it is essential to establish a cooperative relationship for the benefit of the child.

Before school and after school programs of lead-up games, intramural team competition are examples of how the physical educator can enable the children to develop and practice skills and appreciations for competitive sport experiences with an emphasis on instruction. Ability grouping, modification of rules and equipment offer situations for participation for the "late bloomer" and the child who functions better in a less competitive environment. Programs in the school can be more diverse to meet the needs of more children. At the same time, the youth sport program can be the needed challenge for those who are ready to participate in a more competitive atmosphere.

Competition:

There is an important opportunity for the elementary school program and youth sport program to aid children in the development of appropriate attitudes toward competition. Competition is not inherently bad as many would suggest. Competition is a stimulating and rewarding experience when kept in proper perspective.

If the child and his interests and needs are kept foremost in mind, the competitive experience can provide a valuable learning opportunity. The youngster can become aware of his feelings about himself and others. She/he can develop attitudes of fair play and of giving the best effort regardless of winning or losing.

Both physical education and youth sports provide situations where attitudes and appreciations toward competition can be learned.

In the physical education program, activities where the individual competes against himself is a good place to start. Encouragement for a good effort with a pat on the back helps the child develop an attitude toward working to achieve. Discussion about individual differences among people in general helps youngsters appreciate the contributions of others in a positive way.

Recognition of a job well done by peers and adults in physical education and youth sports helps to establish a positive attitude toward competition. Emphasis on the positive aspects and not the negative helps motivate the individual.

Praise for behaviors of cooperative effort among class and teammates builds a spirit among groups and teams that will unite their efforts in team situations.

Many of the lead-up games and self-testing activities presented in the elementary school program serve as a practice ground for the necessary social skills for competition. By participating in less complex lead-up games, there is ample opportunity to practice playing by the rules, sharing responsibilities, giving an individual best effort for the good of the team, accepting defeat and being able to come back to try again. These practice situations are geared for the social development and emotional development of the child.

This, too, can be the case in programs of youth sports. By modifying the rules to give everyone a chance to hit; by not keeping score; using a batting tee and a larger softball can help keep the competition in positive perspective and

not appear to be a matter of life and death to the participants.

Leadership:

Cooperation between youth sports leaders and professional physical educators can be beneficial to both programs but, more importantly, to the youngsters who should be the primary consideration.

The physical educator can contribute in a number of ways beyond the planning and implementation of the physical education program. Direct participation as a coach or an official in youth sports programs affords the physical educator an opportunity to create a proper physical and psychological environment for the children. There would be ample opportunity for use of proper skill development and practice techniques.

The physical educator involved in youth sports as an administrator or consultant can do a great deal for the education of youth sport leaders and parents and can aid in organization and program development. One of the ways the physical educator can contribute to youth sports would be to assist in the development of workshops and clinics for coaches. Many times those who are coaching are interested in improving their knowledge and skill in coaching techniques and skill drills. Here is a golden opportunity for the physical educator to teach or get local coaches to present current information to youth sport leaders. In addition, enlisting the aid of professionals to talk on nutrition, safety, and the psychological, sociological, physiological aspects of working with children in youth sports can only benefit the leaders and ultimately benefit the youngsters.

Those parents and leaders involved in youth sports can make a vital contribution to the positive promotion and support of school programs of physical education. Through communication, education and a heightened awareness about the benefits of physical education for all children these leaders can help gain support for the program through the board of education, the PTA, and through their vote at budget time.

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Twenty million youngsters and over a million adults are giving us a message - Youth Sports are "In"!!! The growth and development of youth sport programs is phenomenal. It is a reflection of the increased awareness and involvement of the American public in health, fitness, and physical activity. Participating in sport and physical activity for adults and children has become an integral part of our culture. Youth Sports has become so popular virtually every community offers some type of sport activity for children and youth.

The total development of the child can be enhanced and enriched through a variety of activity experiences in physical education, youth sport and leisure pursuits. It can be positively affected by a cooperative effort on the part of physical education and youth sport. A willingness to share knowledge and understanding, to work together for the improvement of organization, policies and procedures, and a commitment by all parties to keeping the child first will benefit all children in all aspects of their physical activity and sport participation.

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